

EXHIBIT 7

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OpenOffice 1.1 Competitive Guide SMB Segment

Submitted by Taran Rampersad on 03/26/2004 - 8:48am | [Free Software In the News.](#) | [Free Software Packages](#)

I came across OpenOffice 1.1 Competitive Guide SMB Segment through a post on the TTLUG mailing list, and decided to answer it fully in a FDL'd response because it will save quite a few people from typing everything.

The Basics

In Microsoft's related document (PDF), the basic system requirements of OpenOffice are:

- * *Windows (98, NT, 2000, XP) – Pentium-compatible PC, 64 MB RAM, 130 MB HD; or*
- * *Linux (x86, PowerPC) – 64 MB RAM and 170 MB HD*
- * *Solaris (x66, SPARC) – 64 MB RAM and 240 MB HD; or*
- * *MacOSX (beta); or*
- * *FreeBSD*

They did not, however, compare it to Office XP. We shall through Microsoft's own Office XP System requirements:

- * *Computer with Pentium 133 megahertz (MHz) or higher processor; Pentium III recommended*
- * *# Windows 98, or Windows 98 Second Edition 24 MB of RAM plus an additional 8 MB of RAM for each Office program (such as Microsoft Word) running simultaneously*
- * *Windows Me, or Microsoft Windows NT®*
- * *32 MB of RAM plus an additional 8 MB of RAM for each Office program (such as Word) running simultaneously*
- * *Windows 2000 Professional*
- * *64 MB of RAM plus an additional 8 MB of RAM for each Office program (such as Word) running simultaneously*
- * *Windows XP Professional, or Windows XP Home Edition 128 MB of RAM plus an additional 8 MB of RAM for each Office program (such as Word) running simultaneously*
- * *Hard disk space requirements will vary depending on configuration; custom installation choices may require more or less. Listed below are the minimum hard disk requirements for Office XP suites:*

- * *Office XP Standard*
- * *210 MB of available hard disk space*
- * *Office XP Professional and Professional Special Edition²*
- * *245 MB of available hard disk space*

An additional 115 MB is required on the hard disk where the operating system is installed. Users without Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows Me, or Office 2000 Service Release 1 (SR-1) require an extra 50 MB of hard disk space for System Files Update.

- * *Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows Millennium Edition*

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(Windows Me), Windows NT 4.0 with Service Pack 6 (SP6) or later,³ Windows 2000, or Windows XP or later.

* CD-ROM drive

* Super VGA (800 x 600) or higher-resolution monitor with 256 colors

* Microsoft Mouse, Microsoft IntelliMouse®, or compatible pointing device

Please do not forget the key phrase in these Office XP requirements: "an additional 8 MB of RAM for each Office program (such as Microsoft Word) running simultaneously". That said, OpenOffice more than holds its own, and does so in less disk space on more operating systems.

Being functional on more operating systems guarantees more cross compatibility between platforms, which allows users to change their operating systems, if they so decide, with a lower migration cost. So OpenOffice's customizability could actually decrease costs in the future; it is not reliant on one operating system.

The Minimum Office XP requirements state 'Pentium 133 MHz machine'. In translation, this would probably be a machine used by a Windows 98SE user, which would require them to have 24 - 56 Megabytes of RAM, 375 Megabytes of Hard disk space, etc.

The XP requirements for Office XP are much more interesting. 128-168 megabytes of memory and 325 megabytes of hard drive space.

Let's compare again with the OpenOffice requirements for XP and 98SE: 'Windows (98, NT, 2000, XP) - Pentium-compatible PC, 64 MB RAM, 130 MB HD'.

Clear winner: OpenOffice.

Now we shall look at their 'Value Proposition And Response'.

Value Proposition And Response

Microsoft's document stresses that the licensing costs are not representative of the total costs of ownership, and this is a valid point. But let's compare, point by point:

* **Installation and deployment:** OpenOffice can be installed at no cost, and deployed easily. Microsoft Office XP, however, requires licensing costs and requires more hardware to run on (see above). It also requires that you run an operating system which must be licensed at cost. An international comparison of cost per license of operating system and GDP is revealing in this regard.

* **Data Migration and Testing:** In migrating Microsoft Office documents to OpenOffice, some advanced formatting may be lost - and this is a problem, but it is unreasonable to demand this because of the fact that Microsoft does not make its data formats public.

They make special note on the cost of migrating a Microsoft Access database to OpenOffice, but fail to mention the costs associated with upgrading a Microsoft Access database even with their own software. Free Software and Open Source databases are typically available at no cost, so the money would be spent on the actual 'liberation' of the data. Microsoft will require you to purchase licensing for SQL Server, and businesses will still have to pay for the migration of the data.

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*** Document Conversion And Rewriting Macros:** OpenOffice does not use Visual Basic for Applications, but has a macro language of it's own. It should be noted that Microsoft's macros are also incompatible with those of OpenOffice. Therefore, this is a valid point and would be part of a migration cost, yet one has to wonder at how complex such macros would be in a SMB.

*** Training:** OpenOffice is, for the most part, the same as Microsoft Office XP for a user, but there are things that they will need to learn how to do differently. All things being equal, if a company's staff need formal training for OpenOffice, then they probably need it for every new version of Microsoft Office. Therefore there is a cost on both sides, and they are at least equal.

*** Email client:** Microsoft notes that OpenOffice lacks an email client. This, however, would take us to Mozilla, which is a standalone web browser with more features than Internet Explorer (such as tabbed browsing), and is much more secure than Microsoft Outlook as a default.

*** Collaboration:** Microsoft makes it a point to discuss that collaboration is required. Yet OpenOffice runs on all major operating systems, and Microsoft Office does not. This certainly becomes an issue of collaboration.

They also mention that there is a need to assure mission critical data is impervious to virus attack - and given the latest viruses, this does not bode well for them as all major attacks have taken advantages of flaws in Microsoft Operating Systems and even their Office software. This can lead down the path to security itself, in which ubiquity of Microsoft products probably has an effect.

*** Support:** Microsoft says that there is no dedicated team for the OpenOffice suite. What Microsoft fails to realize is that the 'dedicated team' are mainly the users; OpenOffice has a community whereas Microsoft users have support groups.

*** Limited Compatibility:** Microsoft properly asserts that OpenOffice is not 100% compatible with their product. Microsoft, however, has apparently decided not to support the OpenOffice formats either, for which they have no excuse: the standards for OpenOffice documents are publicly available, whereas Microsoft makes it a habit to sue people for reverse engineering their own formats. Richard Stallman wrote about this in 2002.

Total Value Of OpenOffice

(1) Ease of Use: While computer users throughout the world (including this author) have become familiar with Microsoft's Office suites over the years, OpenOffice is not difficult to learn just by simply *using* it. It's been long kept a secret, but no training in basic use of Office suites is needed; advanced use of the Office suites may constitute need for training regardless of which suite it is.

(2) Tailored Solutions: OpenOffice has the benefit of permitting more customized applications to interact with it due to the Freedom associated with the source code, which means it will allow more people to develop custom applications which interact with it. Microsoft products require more Microsoft products to interact with them, they come at a cost and *limit* what a developer can do since the source code is not available.

(3) Better and Faster Work: Such comparisons are inherently flawed, since they would have to have the same users doing the same work on different Office suites. Let's face it: Users just want to do what they have to with



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their software. In this regard, OpenOffice facilitates this just as Microsoft Office does, but has the benefit of having the source code available for allowing more applications to interact with it. This means more potential productivity when dealing with the business logic of a SMB.

(4) Seamless Data Exchange: Microsoft claims seamless data exchange within Microsoft Office - but it's only between people using Microsoft products. OpenOffice allows people who use a variety of operating systems and data formats to interact with each other. Microsoft Office does not.

(5) Easier Deployment and Maintenance: Installation for either package is very simple. OpenOffice does have a clear benefit here: Service packs are not something one has to constantly look for (at this time). Further, simply installing the latest version of OpenOffice over a later version takes less overall time than constantly updating via patches and service packs.

(6) Security: Microsoft is brave to bring viruses into its marketing strategy when it has been one of Microsoft's greatest problems, despite all the nice things their Marketing brochures have to say about how secure it is. Where the rubber meets the road, Microsoft Office loses.

(7) Investment You Can Trust: Using OpenOffice is an investment of your time, your energy and your future of being able to interoperate with people around the world, without worrying about what operating system that they use. Microsoft Office is an investment in Microsoft's time, energy and future.

Final Words

Microsoft used to have an advertisement asking where you wished to go today; this is more true of OpenOffice since it allows you more control of your data through vendors and even inhouse staff who can help with it. Microsoft is dictating a future; this is why they do not allow Open Standards.

This is also why Microsoft spends so much time in courts around the world.

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Submitted by vipwww on 07/04/2004 - 12:07am

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